

## CLAIMS

## 1. A method including

at a first device, reading a set of information, at least some of said information relatively local to said first device and at least some of said information obtainable from an information server relatively remote from said first device, and setting at least one variable at said first device in response to said information;

at a second device, reading a set of information, at least some of said information relatively local to said second device and at least some of said information from an information server relatively remote from said second device, and setting at least one variable at said second device in response to said information;

wherein at least some of said information is common to both said first device and second device.

2. A method as in claim 1, wherein said information includes configuration used at start-up by said first device.

3. A method as in claim 1, including

recording said information at selected times for said first device;

at said first device, reading said recorded information in addition to said set  
on; and

1 comparing said recorded information with at least some of said set of in-  
2 formation.

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4                   4.        A method as in claim 3, wherein said comparison includes a set of  
5                   resources from which said information can be obtained by said first device; and including  
6                   re-performing said operations of reading said set of information and setting  
7                   values until said set of resources is substantially unchanged.

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9                   5.        A method as in claim 3, wherein said selected times include at each  
10                   restart of said first device.

11  
12 6. A method as in claim 1, wherein said information includes a set of  
13 resources from which said information can be obtained by said first device.

15                   7.       A method as in claim 6, wherein said set of resources includes at  
16                    least a first file at a first said information server and a second file at a second information  
17                    server.

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19            8.        A method as in claim 6, wherein said set of resources includes at  
20        least one file at said information server.

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1           9.     A method as in claim 1, wherein said information includes a set of  
2     values for named variables, including resolving conflicts when said information assigns  
3     two inconsistent values to a single variable, said operation of resolving conflicts including  
4                 determining, for any two sources for said information, a higher priority said  
5     source and a lower priority said source;

6                 parsing, from a higher priority source, an instruction relating to setting said  
7     variable; and

8                 performing said instruction from said higher priority source.

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10           10.    A method as in claim 9, wherein said instruction has a syntactic form  
11     indicating one or more of the following operations:

12                 replacing a value from said lower priority source with a value from said  
13     higher priority source, or  
14                 appending a value from said higher priority source to a value from said  
15     lower priority source.

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17           11.    Apparatus including

18                 at least one information server;

19                 a first device relatively remote from said information server, said first de-  
20     vice including memory having computer programs and data structures capable of being  
21     performed by said first device to read a set of information, at least some of said informa-  
22     tion located relatively local to said first device and at least some of said information ob-

1 tained from said information server, and to set values for at least one variable at said first  
2 device in response to said information;

3 a second device relatively remote from said information server, said second  
4 device including memory having computer programs and data structures capable of being  
5 performed by said second device to read a set of information, at least some of said infor-  
6 mation located relatively local to said second device and at least some of said information  
7 obtained from said information server, and to set values for at least one variable at said  
8 second device in response to said information;

9 wherein at least some of said information is common to both said first de-  
10 vice and said second device.

11  
12 12. Apparatus as in claim 11, wherein said memory at said first device  
13 includes computer programs and data structures that when performed use said informa-  
14 tion at start-up by said first device.

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16 13. Apparatus as in claim 11, said first device including  
17 memory having a record of said information at some past time;  
18 memory including computer programs and data structures capable of being  
19 performed by said first device to compare said recorded information with at least some of  
20 said set of information.

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1           14. Apparatus as in claim 13, wherein said recorded information in-  
2       cludes a set of resources from which said information can be obtained by said first device;  
3       and said first device including

4                       memory having computer programs and data structures capable of being  
5       performed by said first device to re-read said set of information and re-set said values un-  
6       til said set of resources is substantially unchanged.

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8           15. A device including a processor and memory, said memory having  
9       computer programs and data structures capable of being performed by said processor  
10               to couple said device to an information server using a communication link;  
11               to read a set of configuration information, wherein at least some of said  
12       configuration information is located relatively local to said device and at least some of  
13       said configuration information is located at said information server; and  
14               to set values for at least one variable at said device in response to said con-  
15       figuration information, said configuration information being used at start-up by said de-  
16       vice.

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18           16. A device as in claim 15, including  
19       memory having a record of said information at some past time;  
20               wherein said computer programs and data structures are capable of being  
21       performed by said processor to compare said recorded information with at least some of  
22       said set of information.

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2           17. A device as in claim 16, wherein said recorded information includes  
3 a set of resources from which said information can be obtained by said first device; and  
4 wherein said computer programs and data structures are capable of being performed by  
5 said processor to re-read said set of information and re-set said values until said set of re-  
6 sources is substantially unchanged.

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8           18. A method as in claim 1, wherein said set of information is disposed  
9 at a sequence of locations to be read by said first device.

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11           19. A method as in claim 18, including defining a relative priority for a  
12 first and a second information server in response to a relative position of said first and  
13 second information server in said sequence.

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15           20. A method as in claim 18, including selecting said sequence of loca-  
16 tions in response to a variable settable in response to at least one said information server.

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18           21. Apparatus as in claim 11, wherein said set of information is disposed  
19 at a sequence of locations to be read by said first device.

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21           22. Apparatus as in claim 21, including memory having computer pro-  
22 grams and data structures capable of defining a relative priority for a first and a second

1 information server in response to a relative position of said first and second information  
2 server in said sequence.

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4 23. Apparatus as in claim 21, including memory having computer pro-  
5 grams and data structures capable of selecting said sequence of locations in response to a  
6 variable settable in response to at least one said information server.

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